

NEW
ALBION
GALLERY



CONTEMPORARY IRANIAN ART

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PREFACE

A few decades ago not many of us would have dared to imagine the 20th century closing with the universal recognition of contemporary Asian art. Western institutional and art historical interests had usually consigned the arts of Asia and the Middle East as great moments of antique interest, as though contemporaneous expression was what the West did.

When we think of our view of other cultures, superiority remained a lingering post-colonial relic and it took some time to shed. Paradoxically, the idea of modernity and urbane sophistication in Europe happened, in part, through importing the arts from other places. Take East Asia and Persia, for example – from Chinese export ceramics of the late 16th century to Persia's representation in London's Crystal Palace and the Great Exhibition of 1851. The latter's influence on the Arts and Crafts Movement was considerable: in 1882, William Morris wrote: 'To us pattern-designers, Persia has become a Holy Land.'

The change has been remarkable. Major art museums – public and private – collect the art of our time in a far more panoramic way than they have ever done. Biennales and art fairs have grown at a phenomenal rate and now take an interest in cultures that, until recently, were active yet peripheral to our thinking. The British Museum and Louvre have established a presence in Abu Dhabi – the Metropolitan Museum, New York, is presenting an exhibition of contemporary Iranian art until September this year; next year the seventh Dubai Art Fair will be held. The world has seemingly shrunk yet become vaster.

Until the 1990s modern and contemporary Iranian art, like other Middle Eastern countries, received a distant interest from the West. And, Iran – Persia until 1935 – was rugs, miniatures, calligraphy and great architecture. Each is brilliant in its own way but, historically, has been used as a stylistic source for appropriation, where its intrinsic and deeply-set cultural characteristics were applied as style.

From the late 1940s the tensions between embracing Western capitalism and religious conservatism have been well documented. What marks contemporary Iranian art is that it's known and admired as the expression of individuals, not a megaphone for regimes. That's not to claim that each artist is blithely uninterested in issues of national identity, gender, social conduct and the circumstances of contemporary Iranian life. But above all, it's personal – distinctively individual. Tehran is a sophisticated city of millions with the majority of the population under 35 years of age. Its art world is active and connected with a lively museum and gallery scene.

The 13 artists represented in this exhibition work across media with which we are familiar. They are engaged locally and speak to us with a visual language which is universal. The subject matter might be specific but we see it through the lens of individualism. There's a poetic transcendence in perpetual play, often quietly witty, but never gratuitously flippant.

The Australian artist, eX de Medici, is included in the exhibition. She is best known for her large watercolours which synthesise direct experience and become emblematic of social and political circumstances; they are usually laden with historical references. eX and I have a mutual long-standing interest in non-Western cultures. The idea for the exhibition was developed in the wake of her visits to Iran – her love of Persian history, its art and the people she met; she will return to Iran soon.

This is an important exhibition and we are honoured that galleries and artists responded with great enthusiasm to participate. The Middle East has been subject to typecasting, often suggesting that cultures are somehow mass-subservient: recent events disprove that. And as this exhibition reveals, the individual's expression over notions of a doctrinaire collectivism are clearly manifest.

Doug Hall AM

eX de Medici

born 1959, Riverina District of New South Wales, Australia

Convergence of Stars, 2012
watercolor and gold leaf on paper
114.0 x 140.0 cm



Ali Adjalli

born 1939, Mianeh, Iran

Autumn's Grace, 2004

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

149.0 × 199.5 cm

Courtesy of Xerxes Art, London



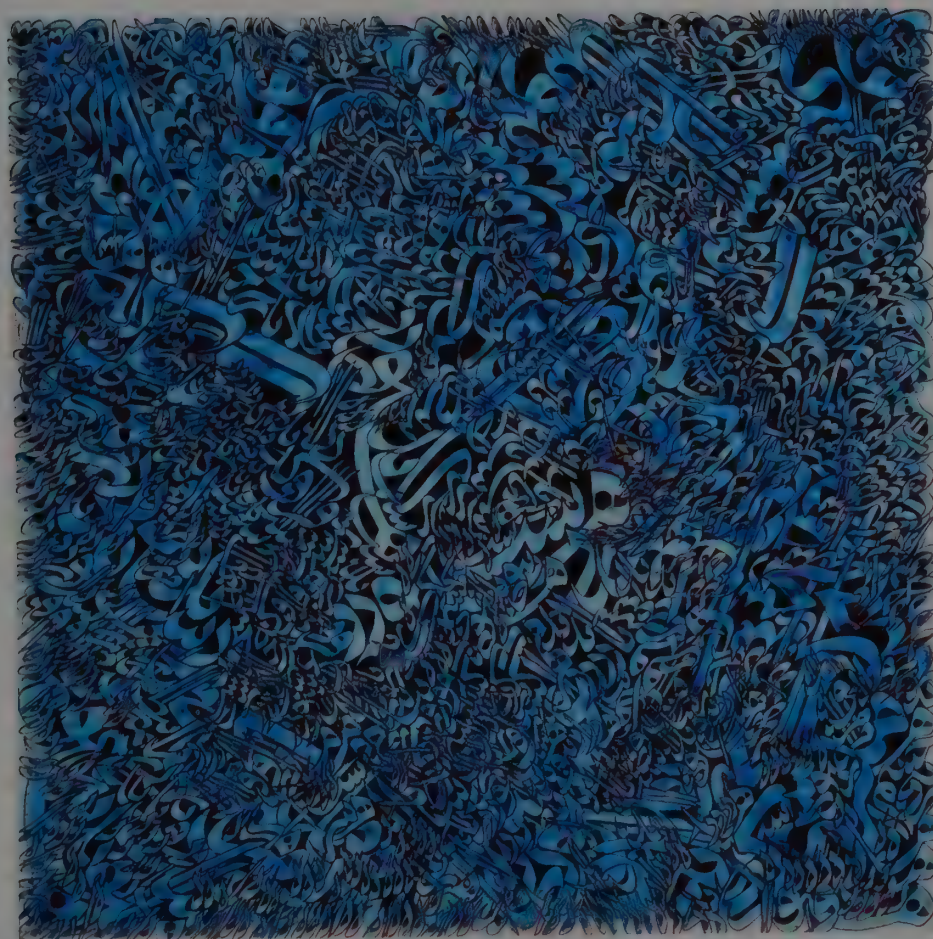
Ali Adjalli

born 1939, Mianeh, Iran

Rahmat, 2005

synthetic polymer paint, oil and calligraphy ink on canvas
150.0 x 150.0 cm

Courtesy of Xerxes Art, London



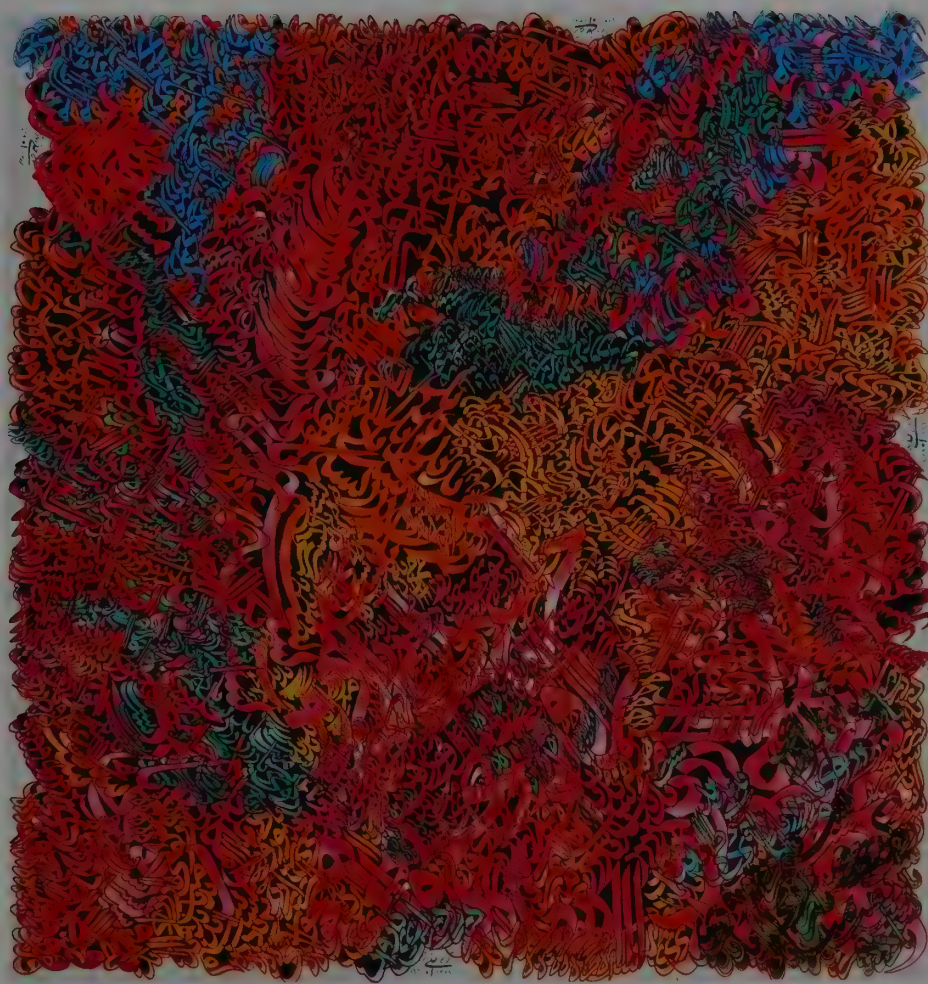
Ali Adjalli

born 1939, Mianeh, Iran

Bissm' Allah, 2004

synthetic polymer paint and oil on canvas
149.5 x 149.5 cm

Courtesy of Xerxes Art, London



Shirin Aliabadi

born 1973, Tehran, Iran

Hybrid Girl 4, 2008

Lambda print mounted on aluminium

100.0 x 78.0 cm

edition of 5

Hybrid Girl 6, 2009

Lambda print mounted on aluminium

100.0 x 78.0 cm

edition of 5

Courtesy of The Third Line, Dubai



Shirin Aliabadi

born 1973, Tehran, Iran

Untitled (II), 2010

pencil and glitter on paper
29.0 x 25.0 cm

Eye Miss You, 2009

pencil and glitter on paper
29.0 x 25.0 cm

Courtesy of The Third Line, Dubai



Nazgol Ansarinia

born 1979, Tehran, Iran

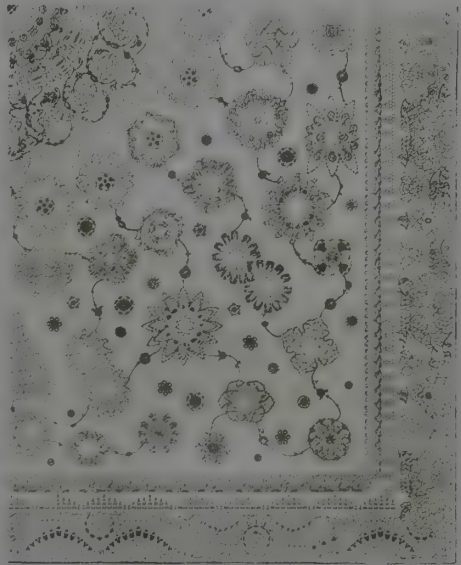
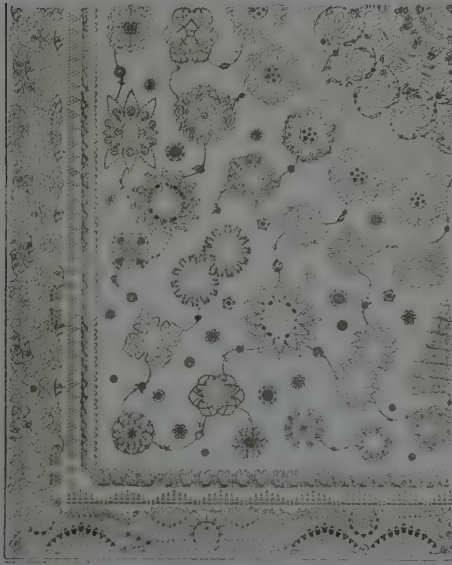
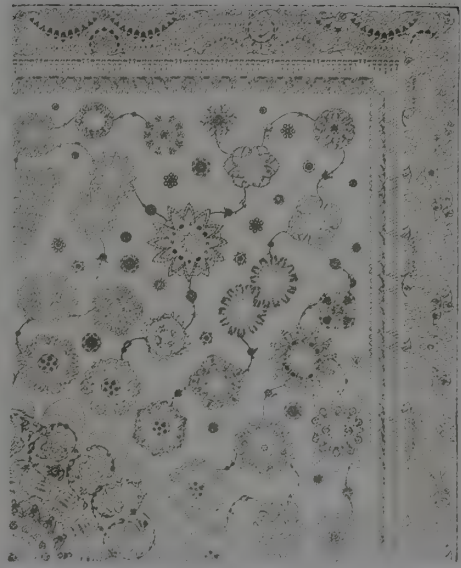
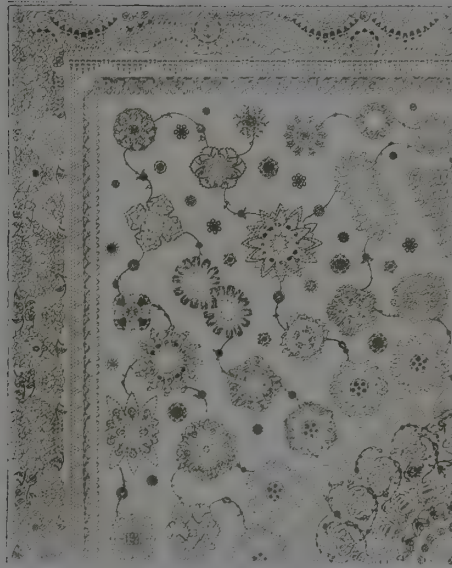
Untitled I - Pattern Series, 2009

digital drawing and ink on tracing paper

215.0 x 173.0 overall (4 sheets)

edition of 3 + 1 AP

Courtesy of Aun Gallery, Tehran



Haleh Anvari

born 1962, Tehran, Iran

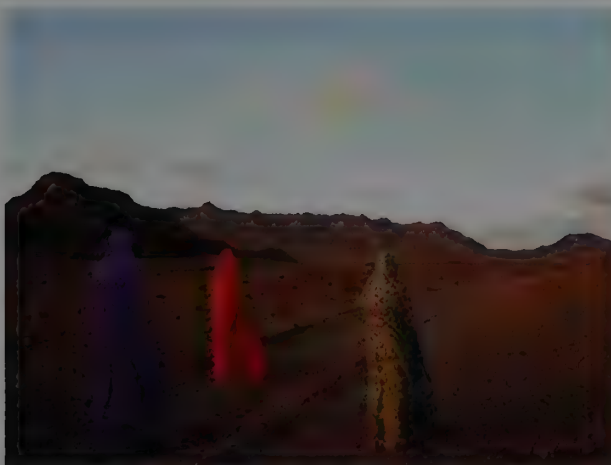
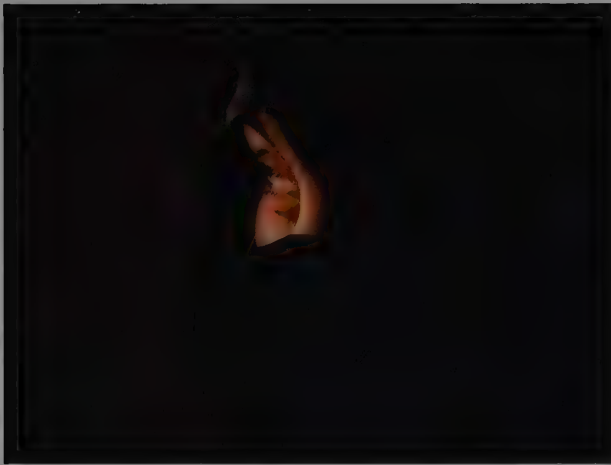
Power of Cliché, 2009

single channel video

duration: 25:22 minutes

edition of 5

Courtesy of Aaran Gallery, Tehran



Shahrzad Changalvaei

born 1983, Tehran, Iran

"I" # 3, 2010

type C photograph on Kodak metallic paper

95.0 x 143.0 cm

edition of 3

"Motherland" # 4, 2010

type C photograph on Kodak metallic paper

95.0 x 143.0 cm

edition of 3

"Body" # 2, 2010

type C photograph on Kodak metallic paper

95.0 x 143.0 cm

edition of 3

From Body Composition Remaining Within Limited Domain series, 2010



Babak Golkar

born 1977, Berkeley, United States of America

Need To Communicate, 2010

hand woven Persian carpet and cadmium yellow synthetic polymer paint
62.0 x 67.0 cm

Courtesy of The Third Line, Dubai

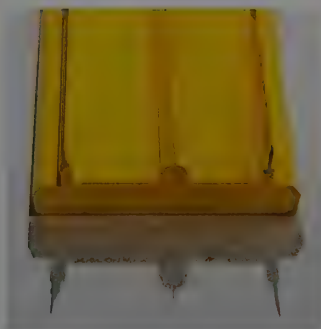
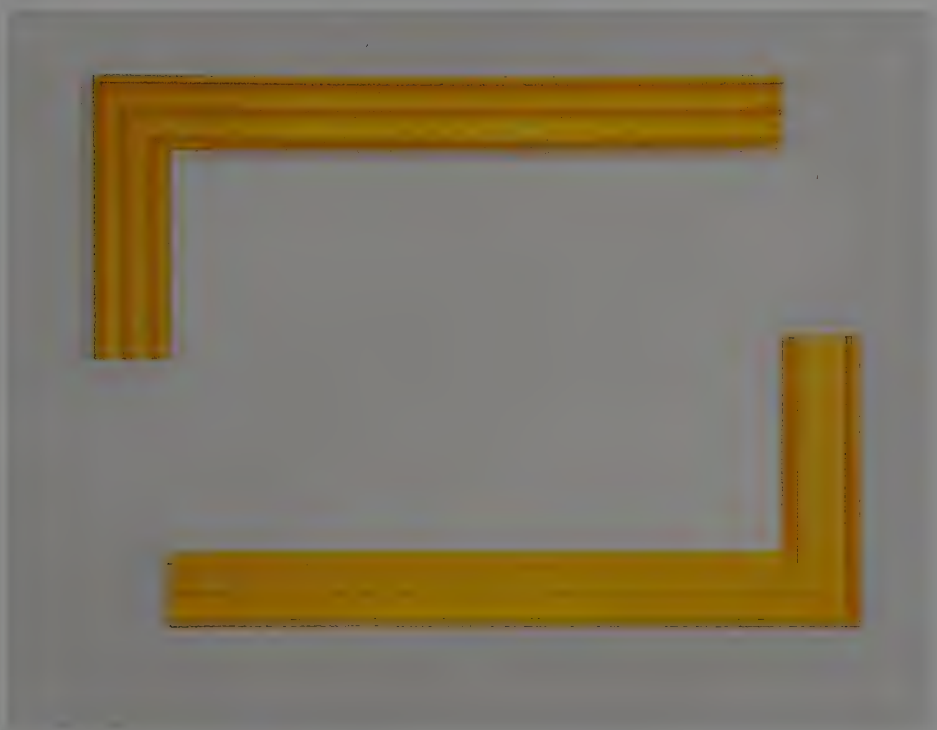


Babak Golkar

born 1977, Berkeley, United States of America

Untitled (Umayyad Mosque), 2011
acrylic sheets and expandable poly foam
203.0 x 162.0 x 7.5 cm
edition of 2

Courtesy of The Third Line, Dubai



detail

Babak Golkar

born 1977, Berkeley, United States of America

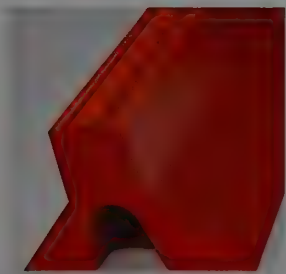
Untitled (Azadi Tower), 2011

acrylic sheets and expandable poly foam

137.0 x 147.5 x 12.5 cm

edition of 2

Courtesy of The Third Line, Dubai



detail

Barbad Golshiri

born 1982, Tehran, Iran

Quad, 2010

C print on paper

106.5 x 106.5 cm (the same size as Malevich's Black Square [1913])

edition of 9

Courtesy of Aaran Gallery, Tehran

[illegible]

Barbad Golshiri

born 1982, Tehran, Iran

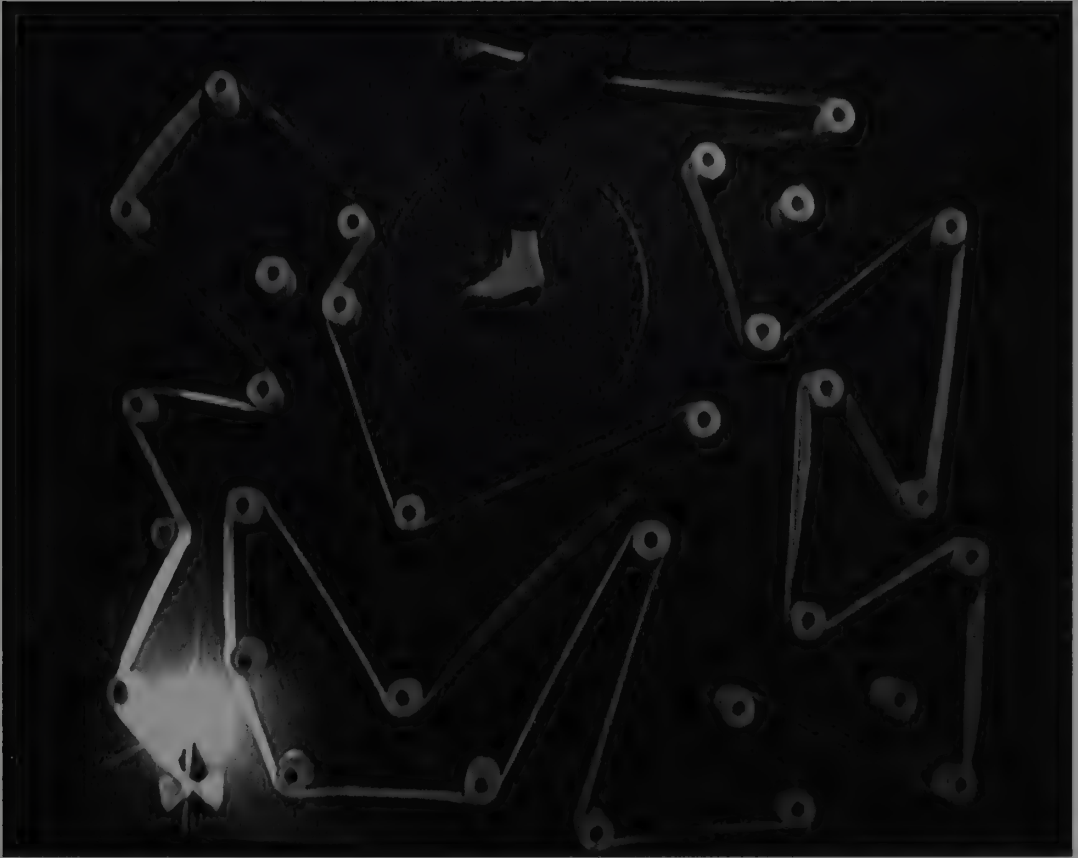
Jxalq (dɜxælgʰ), 2006

single channel video

duration: perpetual loop

edition of 5

Courtesy of Aaran Gallery, Tehran



Samira Hodaei

born 1981, Tehran, Iran

Just a wrong pattern on your sacred wall, 2011

mixed media on canvas

120.0 x 100.0 cm

Courtesy of AB Gallery, Zürich



Samira Hodaei

born 1981, Tehran, Iran

One hand up, one hand down, I am a doll, I wont fall, 2011

mixed media on canvas

120.0 x 100.0 cm

Courtesy of AB Gallery, Zürich



Behnam Kamrani

born 1968, Shiraz, Iran

With Persepolis, 2010

synthetic polymer paint on printed canvas
82.0 x 171.0 cm

The Beautiful, 2010

synthetic polymer paint on printed canvas
82.0 x 158.0 cm

Courtesy of Aun Gallery, Tehran



Behnam Kamrani

born 1968, Shiraz, Iran

In Persepolis, 2010

synthetic polymer paint on printed canvas
82.0 x 171.0 cm

In the Golestan Palace, 2010

synthetic polymer paint on printed canvas
82.0 x 171.0 cm

Courtesy of Aun Gallery, Tehran

Abbas Kowsari

born 1970, Tehran, Iran

Police Women Academy, 2006

type C photograph

70.0 x 100.0 cm

edition of 7

Police Women Academy, 2006

type C photograph

70.0 x 100.0 cm

edition of 7

Police Women Academy, 2006

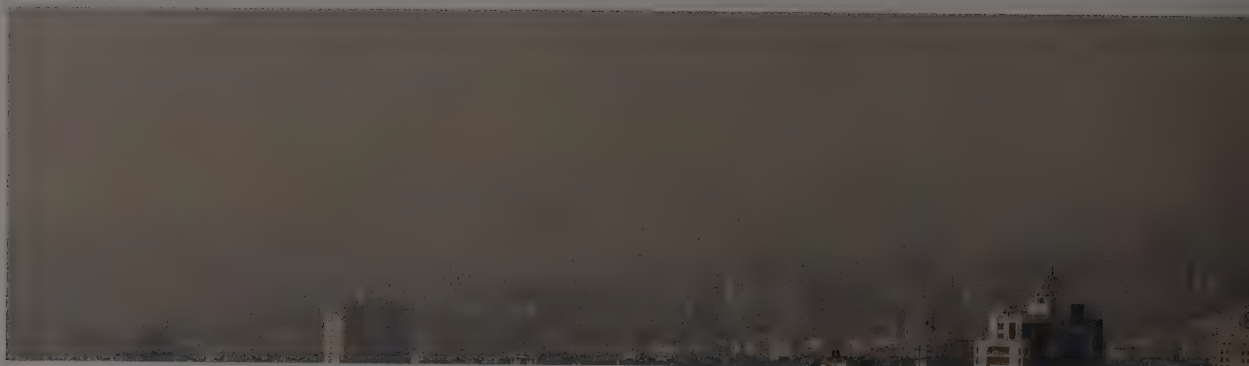
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This Is Tehran - The Time Is 24, 2010

type C photograph

95.0 x 225.5 cm

edition of 5

Courtesy of Aaran Gallery, Tehran



Behrang Samadzadegan

born 1979, Tehran, Iran

Lost in Highway II, 2009

single channel video

duration: 22:21 minutes

edition of 5

Courtesy of Aaran Gallery, Tehran



Farideh Shahsavarani

born 1955, Tehran, Iran

I will be back, 2008-09

single channel video

duration: 8:00 minutes

edition of 3

Courtesy of Aun Gallery, Tehran



Jinoos Taghizadeh

born 1971, Tehran, Iran

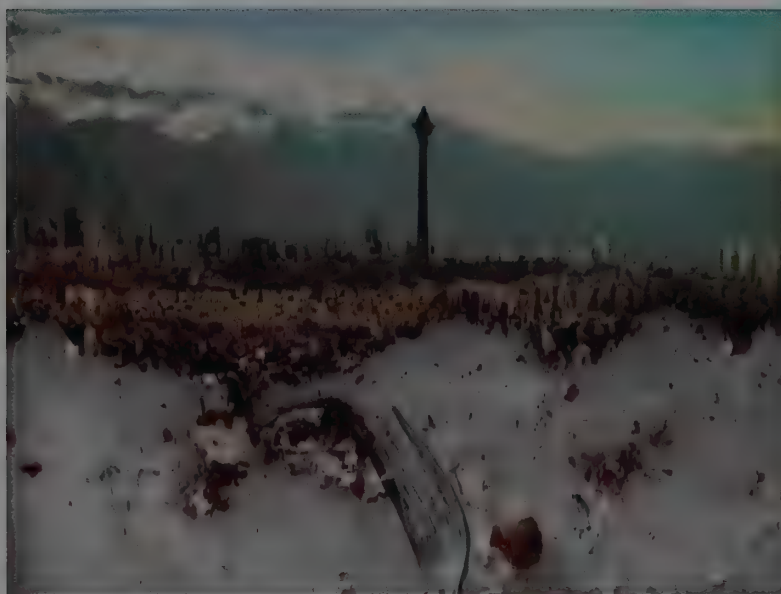
FATNESS and -100 FATNESS, 2010

two channel video

duration: 25:40 minutes

edition of 5

Courtesy of Aaran Gallery, Tehran



Jinoos Taghizadeh

born 1971, Tehran, Iran

Wind Blows Through Streets, 2008

documentation of performance *Forough*, a tribute to Forough Farukhzad.

single channel video

duration: 6:48 minutes

edition of 5

Courtesy of Aaran Gallery, Tehran



LIST OF WORKS:

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